HC 51, Music and Society, winter 2012
Rogers Brubaker

Office hours: Haines Hall 232, Thursday, 2-3; if this is not convenient, please email me to set up an appointment at another time (please note that I will not be available Thursday, January 12). Course web site:  https://classes.sscnet.ucla.edu/course/view/12W-HNRS51-1

Class description

This class addresses the multiple ways in which music is a social activity. Topics include the social functions and meanings of music; the manifold uses of music in everyday life; the ways in which music expresses social identities; the social processes through which genre differences are established or eroded; and the changing economic and technological foundations for the production, performance, distribution, and consumption of music.

Assignments and grading

Requirements for the class include an interpretive essay; a research paper; a series of short written assignments; and active participation in class discussion.

Grades will be based on the following:
- interpretive essay: 15%
- class participation and small assignments: 35%
- research paper: 50%

**Interpretive essay** - due Wednesday, January 25 (4-5 double-spaced pages)

The first essay asks you to use the readings assigned so far (up to and including the readings for January 23) to help you interpret your own experience with music – and, conversely, to use your own experience to help you engage, interpret, extend, or criticize these readings.

Drawing on your own experience with music and on the readings assigned up to this point in the course, with particular attention to the readings by DeNora and Frith, the essay should explore the ways in which musical experience (your own or that of others you know) is shaped by social factors or processes, or the ways in which you (or others) use music to shape your social experience.

This should be an **analytical essay**, not simply a **personal report**; the essay should draw on and engage the literature we have read. The point of the essay is **not** to discuss what music you like, but rather **how music works** in your everyday experience, and/or **how music gives form to personal and social identity**.

A small seminar – a luxury at UCLA -- gives us an unusual opportunity to share work with one another. So we will use the class period January 25, and probably some time on January 30 as well, for students to make brief oral reports based on these essays.
Research Paper (about 12-15 pages, double-spaced)

Please note the following deadlines, so that you can plan ahead.

- proposal (2 pages) due Monday, February 13
- revised proposal with bibliography (after individual meetings with instructor) due Wednesday, February 22
- brief oral presentations on projects in class: Monday, March 12 and Wednesday, March 14
- final paper due Wednesday, March 21

The research paper should engage in some way issues addressed in the readings and class discussions. But there is a great deal of flexibility in how you choose to do so, and it need not be limited to these issues.

As a research paper, the paper should not be based only, or primarily, on assigned readings, but rather on your own research. However, the readings may be useful in suggesting ideas about topics, as well as indicating further relevant readings. For this reason, you want to read ahead, or at least scan the readings for later in the quarter, before the paper proposal is due.

You have a great deal of leeway in choosing a topic for the research paper. This is an opportunity, but it is also a responsibility. It takes some advance planning. For this reason, there is a structured series of deadlines for the initial paper proposal, for a revised proposal, and for brief oral presentations of the project in class, as well as for the final paper.

A more specific description of the assignment, including a list of resources you may want to consult, will be posted on the website.

Small assignments. In addition to the interpretive essay and the research paper, there will be three smaller assignments, described in the syllabus. These will not be given letter grades, but their submission is a firm requirement of the course.

Required readings. One book is required for purchase: Robin Sylvan, *Traces of the Spirit: Religious Dimensions of Popular Music* (available on Amazon). The readings for the first two weeks (except Obelkevich, which is available online, as indicated in the syllabus) will be available on the course website. All other readings will be available through college e-reserves (http://catalog.library.ucla.edu/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?PAGE=rbSearch&DB=local); some are also available online, as indicated below. The required readings include substantial portions of one other book, which some of you may wish to purchase: Tia DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life*.

Reading questions. Reading questions will be posted on the course website for each set of readings. These are questions to think about as you do the readings. While you do not have to write out answers to them, you should be prepared to answer these questions in class.

Schedule of meetings and assignments
1. Monday, January 9.  Introduction


3. Monday, January 16. No class: Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday

   c. Assignment: keep a “musical journal” for 24 hours. Note all the occurrences of music of which you are aware, not just music you yourself listen to, but any other music you encounter in your environment from any source. For each instance, note (as far as you can observe) the social context and what is being done to or with the music.

5. Monday, January 23. Music and social identities
   a. Simon Frith, "Towards an Aesthetic of Popular Music."
   b. Simon Frith and Angela McRobbie, "Rock and Sexuality."
   c. Simon Jones, "Crossover Culture: Popular Music and the Politics of 'Race'"

6. Wednesday, January 25. Interpretive essay due; student presentations of interpretive essays

7. Monday, January 30. Music and religion
   a. Robin Sylvan, *Traces of the Spirit: Religious Dimensions of Popular Music*, pp. 1-82 and 214-221; in addition, each student should read at least one of the four chapters of Part II, each focused on a particular popular music subculture.
   c. Assignment. 2011 was a notable year for social and political movements. Beginning in Tunisia, the “Arab Spring” spread throughout North Africa and the Middle East, while in the US, the Occupy movement grew from Occupy Wall Street in September to movements across the country. There were large protests in Greece and elsewhere in Europe against austerity policies, and massive demonstrations at the end of the year in Russia. Choose a recent protest movement from a country whose language you know well, do a little reading on the role of music in that movement, and find an example of a song that has figured in the movement. (In the US, this might be the Occupy movement, the Tea Party movement, or an earlier social or political movement.) In the discussion forum section of the class website, post a link to the song along with a brief (paragraph-length) description of the song and the context. Begin the subject line of the post with your name.

   b. Kofi Agawu, "The Challenge of Semiotics"
   c. Leonard Bernstein, “Musical Semantics,” lecture 3 from *The Unanswered Question*, from 22:32 through 1:32:50, and accompanying handout. The film can be viewed on YouTube at [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8IkJbc_aMTg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8IkJbc_aMTg); the handout will be available on the course website.

10. Wednesday, February 8. Music and meaning (2)
    b. Listening assignment to accompany McClary reading (details on the listening assignment will be found in the reading questions for today)

    **Research paper proposal due**
    a. Howard Becker, *Art Worlds*, Chapter 1


d. Simon Frith, “Genre Rules”

12. Wednesday, February 15. No class – individual meetings to discuss research papers

13. Monday, February 20: No class, President’s Day holiday


Revised research proposal due


15. Monday, February 27. The business of music (1).

a. Simon Frith, "The Industrialization of Popular Music."

http://mcs.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/25/3/333.pdf

c. Current debates about the proposed Stop Online Piracy Act (details to be provided with reading questions for this topic).

16. Wednesday, February 29. The business of music (2): programmed music


b. Tia DeNora, Music in Everyday Life, Chapter 5, pp. 129-150


17. Monday, March 5. Technology (1)


b. Listening assignment to accompany Katz, chapter 7: “Notjustmoreidlechatter”; “Praise You”; “Take Yo' Praise”; “Fight the Power” (details in reading questions)
18. Wednesday, March 7. Technology (2)

   a. Katz, *Capturing Sound*, chapter 8 (pp. 158-175 only)


   c. Writing assignment (1-2 doubled spaced pages): Discuss some ways in which technology has continued to transform the production, distribution, and consumption of music since Katz’s book and Lee and Peterson’s essay were published in 2004. (You may want to refer back to the seven basic traits of recording technology that Katz describes in Chapter One.)

19. Monday, March 12. Student presentations

20. Wednesday, March 14. Student presentations

**Research paper due Wednesday, March 21.** The paper should be submitted to the sociology department office (Haines 264). Please make sure my name as well as your name is on the paper. If you would like the paper returned to you, please provide a large self-addressed, stamped envelope.